

What is claimed is:

1. A device for removing a guide catheter from about a linear object positioned within a lumen of the guide catheter, the device comprising:
 - a body with a front edge, a rear edge, an upper edge and a lower edge;
 - a distal segment defining a central opening sized to engage the linear object, the distal segment positioned adjacent the lower edge and generally extending from the front edge toward the rear edge and adapted so that the guide catheter may pass about an outer surface of the distal segment as the linear object passes through the central opening of the distal segment;
 - a blade mounted between the lower edge and the outer surface of the distal segment and supported by a web extending between the lower edge and the distal segment;
 - the blade including a first cutting portion extending from the lower edge which is angled from the front edge toward the rear edge as the first cutting portion extends toward the distal segment;
 - the blade including a second cutting portion extending from the distal segment toward the lower edge which is angled from the front edge toward the rear edge as the second cutting portion extends toward the lower edge;
 - the first and second cutting portions of the blade forming a notch between the lower edge and the distal segment; and
 - the blade positioned to engage the guide catheter as the guide catheter passes about the outer surface of the distal segment.
2. The device of claim 1, wherein the notch is positioned proximate the distal segment.
3. The device of claim 1, wherein the device further includes a proximal segment with an arcuate side opening member defining a central opening, the proximal segment extending from the lower edge adjacent the rear edge and aligned with the distal segment, the central opening of the proximal segment sized to engage the linear object.

4. The device of claim 3, wherein the distal segment includes an arcuate side opening member sized to receive the linear object positioned adjacent the second cutting portion of the blade and extending toward the rear edge in alignment with the arcuate side opening member of the proximal segment.
5. The device of claim 4, wherein the arcuate side opening member of the distal segment includes a forward smaller diameter portion and a rearward larger diameter portion.
6. The device of claim 5, wherein the web includes a pair of laterally extending opposing wings positioned rearward of the cutting portions of the blade, each wing angled rearward and downward to deflect the catheter from about the outer surface of the distal segment as the linear object passes through the distal segment.
7. The device of claim 6, wherein the distal segment defines a transition point between the smaller and the larger diameter portions and the wings are positioned adjacent the transitioned point.
8. The device of claim 4, wherein a nose extends forward from the smaller diameter portion of the distal segment and the nose is adapted to be inserted within and engage the lumen of the guide catheter.
9. An assembly for removing a guide catheter from about a cardiac pacemaker lead comprising:
 - a guide catheter including a lumen within which the pacemaker lead is received;
 - the pacemaker lead including a distal end and terminal end, with a lead body extending therebetween;
 - a cutter for removing the guide catheter from about the lead after placement of the lead, the cutter including:
 - a body with a front edge and a lower edge;

a lead management segment including a side opening arcuate member defining a central opening for receiving the lead, the lead management segment positioned adjacent the lower edge and connected to the body by a web, the lead management segment adapted so that the guide catheter body passes over an outer surface when the lead is within the central opening;

a blade extending between the body and the lead management segment supported by the web, the blade including a first portion extending from the body toward the lead management segment angling rearward with respect to the front edge and a second portion extending from the lead management segment toward the body angling rearward with respect to the front edge, the first and second portions forming a notch;

the cutter positioned about lead adjacent the terminal end with the blade positioned to engage the guide catheter.

10. A method of removing a guide catheter from about an implantable cardiac lead comprising:

providing the implantable lead with a terminal end and a distal end and a lead body extending therebetween, the guide catheter with a proximal end and a distal end and a linear body extending therebetween and a fitting mounted at the proximal end, the lead positioned within a lumen extending through the linear body of the guide catheter with the terminal end of the lead extending from the fitting mounted at the proximal end of the guide catheter;

providing a cutter including a body with a front edge, a rear edge and a lower edge, a web extending from the lower edge and including a blade arranged toward the front edge, the web including a lead management segment on the web opposite the lower edge, the lead management segment including an arcuate side opening member defining a central opening for receiving the lead body, the blade including a lower cutting edge adjacent the lead management segment extending rearwardly toward the lower edge and an upper cutting surface adjacent the lower edge extending rearwardly toward the lead management segment, the upper and lower cutting edges defining a notch in the blade;

positioning a cutter about the lead body with the lead body positioned within the lead management segment and the front edge of the cutter toward the proximal end of the guide catheter;

engaging the fitting of the guide catheter with the blade;

holding the lead in position relative to the cutter and drawing the guide catheter rearward along the lead so that the blade engages and slits the guide catheter; and

removing the slit guide catheter from about the lead.